

## **Networking Your Small Business**

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## 'Got Networking'

Commerce Director Tony Preite will be the keynote speaker at this years Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) conference. The conference, March 21 and 22<sup>nd</sup>, is titled 'Got Networking' and will tackle such issues as intellectual property, governmental contracting, and project and financial planning. "Nine out of ten businesses in Montana employ five persons or less, so getting small business together for training and sharing best practices is an important way to support this critical sector and grow our economy," Governor Brian Schweitzer said. "This agenda for 2006 looks like a great fit for our shared goal of helping local businesses compete nationally and globally."

## **Program Specifics**

The Conference is to be held at the Holiday Inn Missoula—Parkside. Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR), are programs for research and development grants from federal agencies. Tony Preite explained that typically these grants support feasibility studies and prototype development/testing. "Sometimes people think you need to be a large company to compete in this market, but we have recently seen Montana's small businesses do very well in securing large-scale contracts," Preite said. "Our small businesses are primed to be competitive because of the innovation that already exists, and this program can help you take it to the next level."

For more information on this years conference contact Linda Brander at (406) 841-2749, or visit the website at http://www.medamembers.org/sbiragendamarch06.html